

#7

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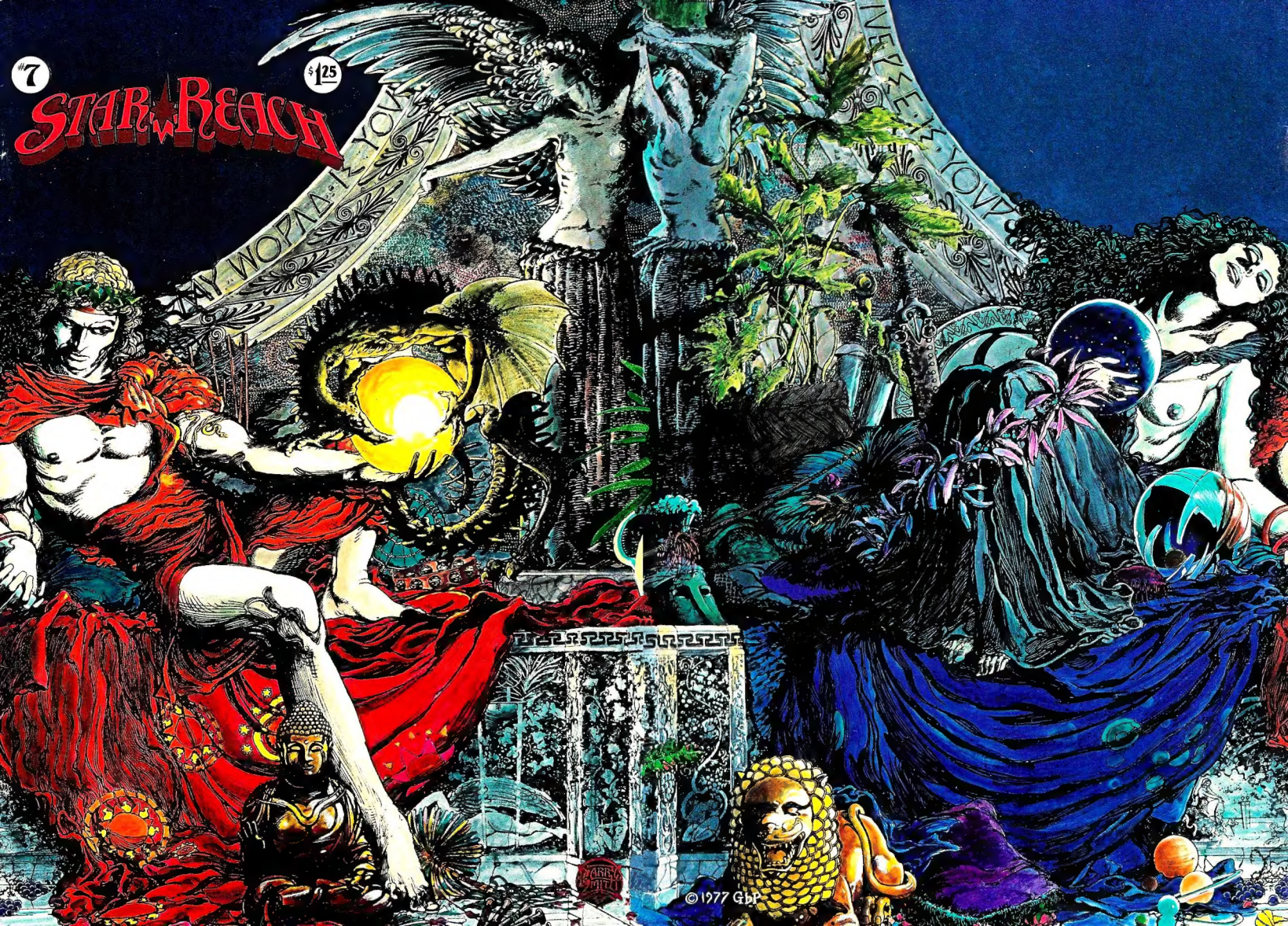
STAR REACH



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7 January 1977
Hayward, CA

I don't have much to say this time around, except to note the decidedly international character of this issue: contributors Satoshi Hirota and Masaichi Mukaide from Japan, Dave Sim and Fabio Gasbarri from Canada, Barry Smith from England (via New York), Mike Vosburg and Steve Englehart, surely from a space all their own, not to mention Jeff Bonivert from (of all places) Hayward, CA.

I hope you enjoy this issue as much as I enjoyed putting it together.

Mike Friedrich



A new
genre...

The
unique
synthesis
of
underground
and
overground...

GROUND LEVEL COMICS

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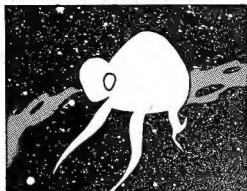
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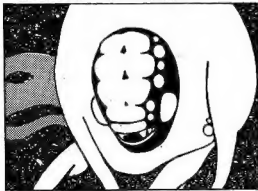
"IT APPEARED PRACTICALLY OUT OF NOWHERE ON THE FORWARD SCREEN... TOO SUDDEN FOR ME TO SWERVE OR STOP..."



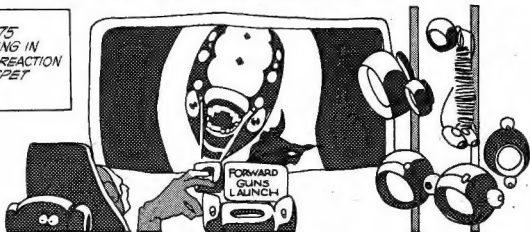
"IT WAS UGLY AS SIN AND, AS FAR AS I COULD SEE, DEAD, OR A REASONABLE FACSIMILE THEREOF..."



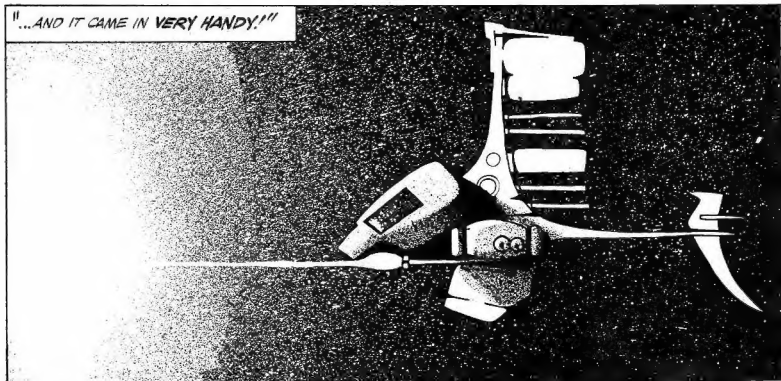
"...WHEN THE MOUTH OPENED IN FRONT OF ME, IT WAS AS IF THE LIGHTS HAD GONE OUT IN CARLSBAD CAVERNS..."



"I HAD HAD A 75 HODGSON RATING IN ACCURACY AND REACTION TIME AT THE ASPET ACADEMY..."

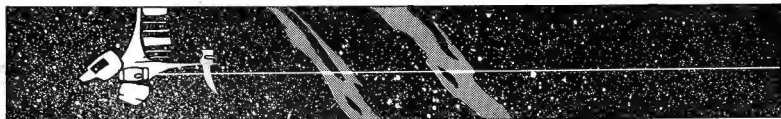


"...AND IT CAME IN VERY HANDY!"



"I HAD BEEN PILOTING ONE OF THE MOTHERLOAD PIONEER SHIPS FOR INTERCONTINENTAL FOR FIVE YEARS, SO IT HAD COME AS NO SURPRISE WHEN THE WORD CAME DOWN THAT

I WAS OFF TO INVESTIGATE PLANETARY BODIES IN THE FARTHEST REACHES OF THE KNOWN UNIVERSE FOR POSSIBLE SIGNS OF LIFE..."



"I HAD NEVER FOUND, PERSONALLY,
AN HONEST-TO-GOODNESS CAPABLE-
OF-SUSTAINING LIFE PLANET....SO

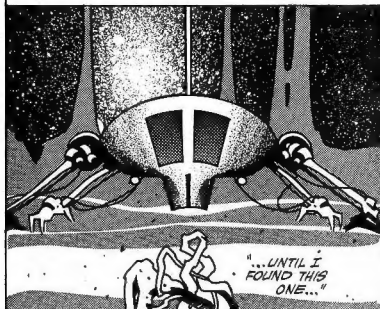
YOU CAN IMAGINE WHAT I FELT LIKE
AS THE PRELIMINARY SURFACE OXYGEN
RATIO READOUT CAME UP PLUS 1.956."



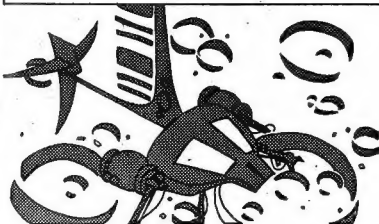
"HELL, THERE WERE ONLY SEVENTEEN KNOWN
LIFE-SUSTAINING MUDBALLS SO FAR, THIS SIDE
OF EARTH PRIME..."

"THERE WAS A STANDING BONUS FROM
INTERCONTINENTAL OF SEVENTEEN HUNDRED
CREDITS FOR FINDING ONE OF THE SUCKERS,
WHICH WOULD EASILY PAY FOR THE TRAUMA
I HAD JUST SUFFERED..."

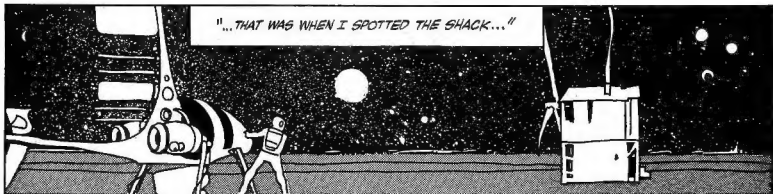
"I WAS PRETTY ANXIOUS JUST TO PLANT
THE FLAG AND GO HOME..."



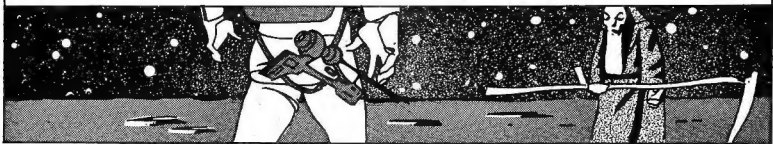
"...UNTIL I
FOUND THIS
ONE..."



"...THAT WAS WHEN I SPOTTED THE SHACK..."



"THE FIRST TIME I SAW HIM, HE WAS JUST
STANDING IN FRONT OF THE SHACK, LOOKING
FIT TO CHEW NAILS WHEN HE SAW ME COMING..."



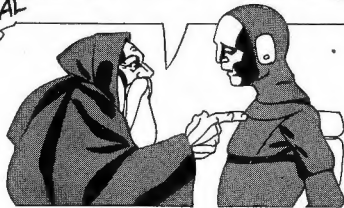
"I KNOW I SHOULD HAVE SAID
SOMETHING LIKE 'GREETINGS
FROM THE PLANET EARTH,' BUT

HE LOOKED SO PATHETIC JUST STANDING
THERE THAT THE FIRST THING THAT
CAME OUT WAS..."



WHO'M I?
WHO'M I?
WHY YOU
IGNORANT
DAMN MORTAL
...

I'M GOD!

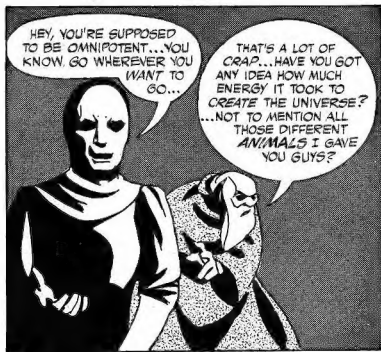
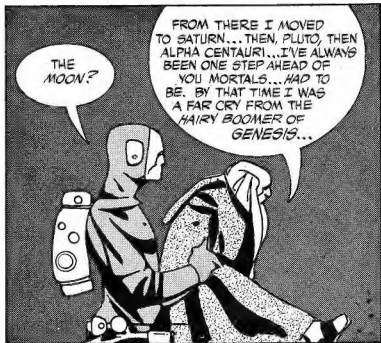
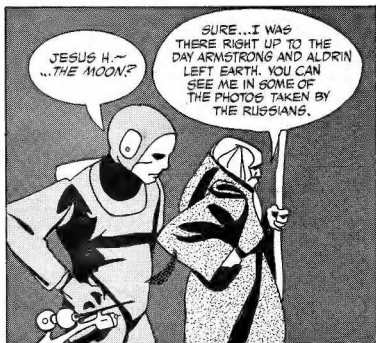


STORY
DAVE SIM
ART
FABIO GASBARRI
LETTERING
BILL PAYNE

"WELL, NOW... THE LAST PLACE I
EXPECTED TO MEET MY MAKER
WAS ON A 1:26 R INTERSPACE

MUDBALL, BUT AFTER I STOPPED
LAUGHING, I FIGURED I OUGHT
TO GET TO KNOW HIM BETTER..."

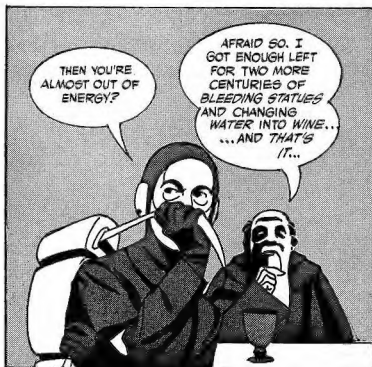






YOU MEAN
GOD CAN RUN
OUT OF ENERGY?

THAT'S RIGHT...I USED MOST
OF WHAT WAS LEFT PARTING
THE RED SEA AND MAKING THOSE
COLUMNS OF FIRE...NOT TO
MENTION THE BIG CROWD-PLEASER
FLOODS I USED TO PUT ON
BACK THEN...



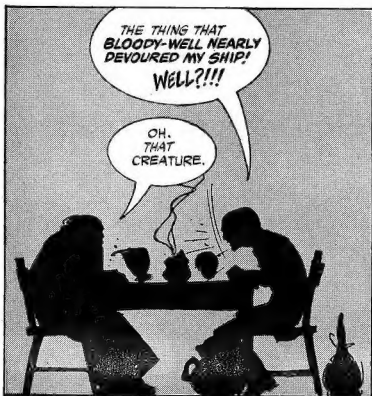
THEN YOU'RE
ALMOST OUT OF
ENERGY?

AFRAID SO. I
GOT ENOUGH LEFT
FOR TWO MORE
CENTURIES OF
BLEEDING STATUES
AND CHANGING
WATER INTO WINE...
...AND THAT'S
IT...



SAY...DO YOU KNOW
ANYTHING ABOUT THAT CREATURE
OUT THERE?

WHAT
CREATURE?



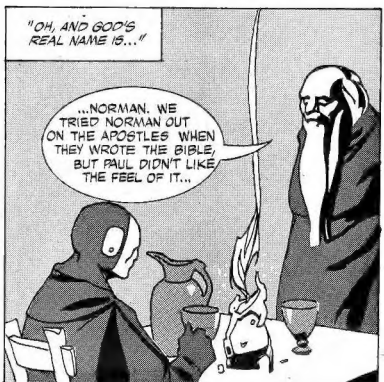
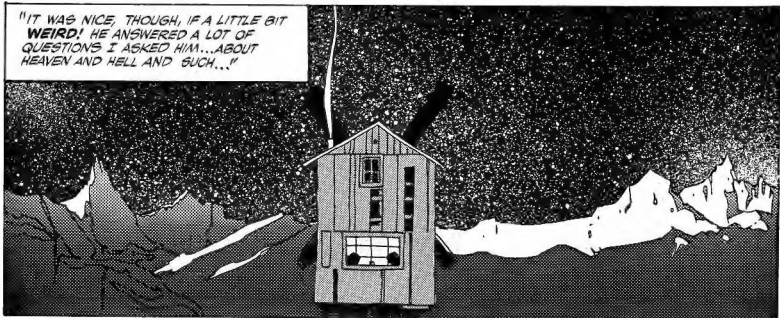
THE THING THAT
BLOODY-WELL NEARLY
DEVoured MY SHIP!
WELL?!!!

OH.
THAT
CREATURE.



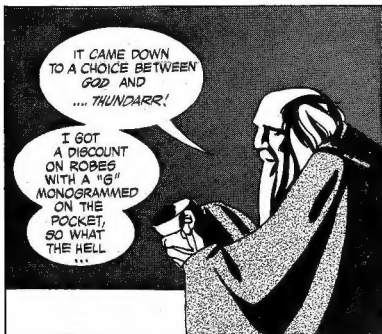
WHAT THE
HELL WAS THAT
THING?

A
KANGAROO
...



...HE SAID, WHEN
YOU'RE COMPETING
WITH JOVE FOR
FOLLOWERS...

...NORMAN JUST
DOESN'T
MAKE IT...



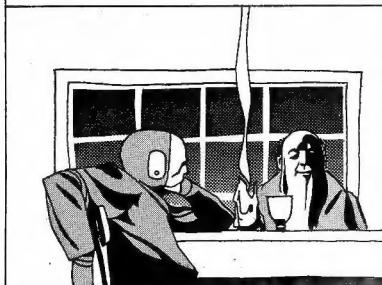
IT CAME DOWN
TO A CHOICE BETWEEN
GOD AND
... THUNDARR!

I GOT
A DISCOUNT
ON ROBES
WITH A "G"
MONOGRAMMED
ON THE
POCKET,
SO WHAT
THE HELL

"I, FOR SURE, HAD A PROBLEM.
I WAS SUPPOSED TO REPORT ANY
INHABITABLE PLANET TO
INTERCONTINENTAL..."



"I WANTED TO BE A NICE GUY
ABOUT IT, BUT, HELL... **SEVENTEEN**
HUNDRED CREDITS, YOU DON'T RUN
ACROSS THAT EVERY DAY."



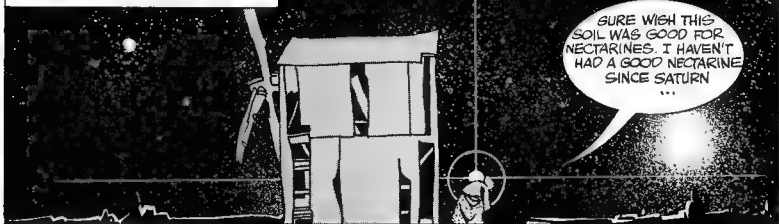
"I JUST KNEW THEY'D HARASS
THE HELL OUT OF THE POOR OLD GUY
IF I BROUGHT HIM BACK... NOT TO
MENTION THE BIG WIG REACTION
AT THE CHURCH INCORPORATED
BUILDING..."



"I'D MADE UP MY MIND JUST AS
THE SUN STARTED COMING UP I
LEFT THE SHACK AND HEADED
BACK TO MY SHIP..."



"HE WAS WEEDING HIS RUTABAGA
CROP WHEN I LEFT, JUST SORT OF
MUMBLING TO HIMSELF..."



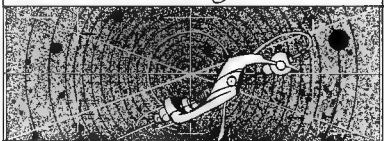
"I DON'T THINK HE REALLY GAVE A DAMN WHAT
HAPPENED. HE PROBABLY REALIZED WHAT MY
REPORT COULD DO TO HIM, BUT I DON'T DOUBT
THAT YOU CAN GET DAMNED TIRED OF KEEPING
AHEAD OF A BUNCH OF SMART-ASS MORTALS
ALL YOUR LIFE... ESPECIALLY
IF YOU'RE IMMORTAL."



"I FILED MY REPORT ON THE PLANET JUST LIKE
I WAS SUPPOSED TO. YOU CAN SEE IT ON
INTERCONTINENTAL CHART GRID No. 2822076...
JUST DOWN IN THE
LEFT HAND CORNER."



Planet grade A/E 14 R 1.97 #2134V...
"Heaven"... uninhabitable... if you find yourself
out that way, wave as you go by...



END

THE HISTORY OF JAPAN BEFORE THE CHINESE SYSTEM OF WRITING WAS INTRODUCED IS THE STUFF OF MYTH AND LEGEND. TALES OF FIRE GODS AND GODDESSES, DEMONS AND GIANT SERPENTS...

CENTURIES LATER THIS AGE ENDED AND MAN DOMINATED THE LAND. THIS TALE I NOW TELL IS SET IN THIS LATTER ERA. THE EARLIER DAYS ARE ALL BUT FORGOTTEN...

... BUT IT IS A PERIOD WHEN DISPUTES BETWEEN CLANS, MONARCHS AND SPIRITS CONTINUE ENDLESSLY...

YES, THE OLD DAYS ARE NEAR-FORGOTTEN...

BUT ARE THEY TRULY GONE?

武士 THE BUSHI

BUT LET ME BEGIN...

A LONE FIGURE GALLOPS TOWARD A LONELY TEMPLE...

HE SHUDERS FOR A MOMENT, BUT THEN PRESSES ON...

THEN, ENTERING THE HOLY TEMPLE THE
YOUNG WARRIOR KNOWS HE FALLS A FORCE
ABLE TO CRUSH HIM INTO DUST-- BUT FACE
IT HE MUST!

THE HIGH PRIEST SPEAKS.

WELCOME,
YOUNG ONE.
YOUR FATE IS
LOADED WITH
MISERY AND
SORROW.
IS THERE A
WAY I MAY
UNBURDEN
YOU?

YES--
YOU
MIGHT
SAY I
WAVE
COME
FOR
YOUR
ADVICE.

MY NAME
IS RYMA.

I MUST FIRST
RELATE TO
YOU THE TALE
OF MY GREAT
TRAGEDY.

MY NAME IS
RYUMA.

"TWO NIGHTS AGO I
RODE TO BATTLE
WITH MY FATHER.

"WHEN DISASTER
STRUCK!"

OUR FORCES ARE
SURROUNDED,
MY SON!

WE'VE BEEN
TRACKED!

THERE MUST BE A
TRAITOR AMONG US--

OR A
DEMON!

FATHER, LET US
RETREAT TO THE
HILLS!

WE CAN
WITHSTAND
THEM THERE!

"BUT BEFORE I COULD ANSWER--

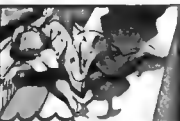
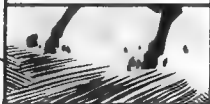


HE WAS DEAD BEFORE
HE HIT THE GROUND...

"I HID THAT NIGHT IN THE
HILLS AND RETURNED
TO MY HOME THE
FOLLOWING DAY...



"ONLY TO FIND A VISITOR
HAD CALLED..."



"DEATH!"

"MY BROTHER--
MY MOTHER--



"BOTH
DEAD!"

"BOTH
SAVAGELY
MURDERED!"



"I IMMEDIATELY CAME HERE
FOR GUIDANCE..."

FATHER



SOMEONE
PLANNED THIS
MASSACRE OF OUR
CLAN AND I HAVE
COME TO THIS
TEMPLE TO
FIND OUT
WHO!



I WILL
NEVER AGAIN
SLEEP IN PEACE
UNTIL I FIND
THIS
TRAITOR--

-- AND
HAVE
DESTROYED
HIM...



BUT...
OF WHAT HELP
MAY I BE,
YOUNG ONE?

I FOUND
SOMETHING HIDDEN
OUTSIDE IN THE
BUSHES...

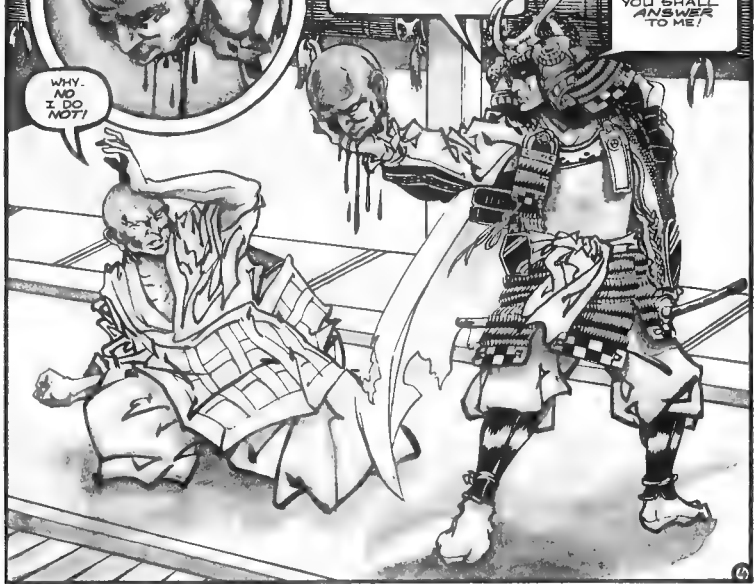



"I WOULD
ASK YOU
IF YOU
KNOW
THIS MAN!"

WHY...
NO
I DO
NOT!

THEN I WILL TELL
YOU! HE WAS
A LOYAL FRIEND
OF MY FATHER...
IS THIS NOT
THE TRUE
HIGH PRIEST
OF THIS TEMPLE?

YOU HAVE
DISGUISED
YOURSELF WELL,
TRAITOR.
SHOW YOUR
TRUE FORM--
AND THEN
YOU SHALL
ANSWER
TO ME!





NO, YOUNG ONE!
IT IS YOU
WHO SHALL...


DIE!

MY FATHER
WAS
RIGHT--
--A DEMON
WAS BEHIND
THIS
TREACHERY!


BUT--
WHY?

HE SERPENT GIVES
NO REPLY, BUT SNAKES
SWIFTLY FORTH
WITH FETID BREATH
AND RANGED TEETH

IN RESPONSE
THE YOUNG WARRIOR
BELATS HIS YOUTH
AND INEXPERIENCE
BY ATTACKING
FASTER THAN
THE DEMON.



--AND WITH A SWORD
WIELDED IN
MIGHTY HANDS
EASILY CUTS THROUGH
THE FLESH AND BONES



BUT JUST A THE
DEMON'S DEFEAT
S MADE
CERTAIN

--IT IS AT THIS INSTANT
THAT THE UNBELIEVABLE
OCCURS!

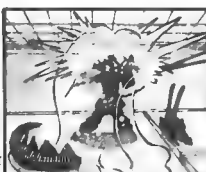
WITHIN RYUMA'S MIND AN ALIEN
VOICE SPEAKS "I AM THE VICTOR!

"LONG HAVE I BEEN WAITING FOR THIS
MOMENT. HUNDREDS OF YEARS AGO
MY RACE AND YOUR FOREFATHERS, THE
MIGHTY GODS RULED THIS LAND.
BUT BEING MORTAL WE ALL PERISHED
BEFORE THE COMING OF MAN.

"ALL THESE YEARS I HAVE BEEN HOPING
THERE LIVES IN THIS NEW WORLD ONE
WITH THE BLOOD OF THE TRUE GODS.

"YOU HAVE THE BLOOD OF THE ANCIENT
RACES. IN YOU RUNS THE VIOLENT
CODE SO SIMILAR TO MY OWN!

"I HAVE LAIN DORMANT, MY POWERS
FADING, UNTIL I SENSED YOUR
EXISTENCE-- BUT I HAD TO TEST
YOU TO MAKE CERTAIN!



NOW I KNOW--
YOU
SHALL REVIVE
THROUGH
I ONCE
POSSESSED!


THE SAMURAI'S
LAST THOUGHTS
ARE ON THE
TRAGEDY
OF HIS DEATH...

-- TO BE SELF-SWORN
TO BATTLE DEMONIC FORCES,
ONLY TO FIND
IN SO BATTLING..



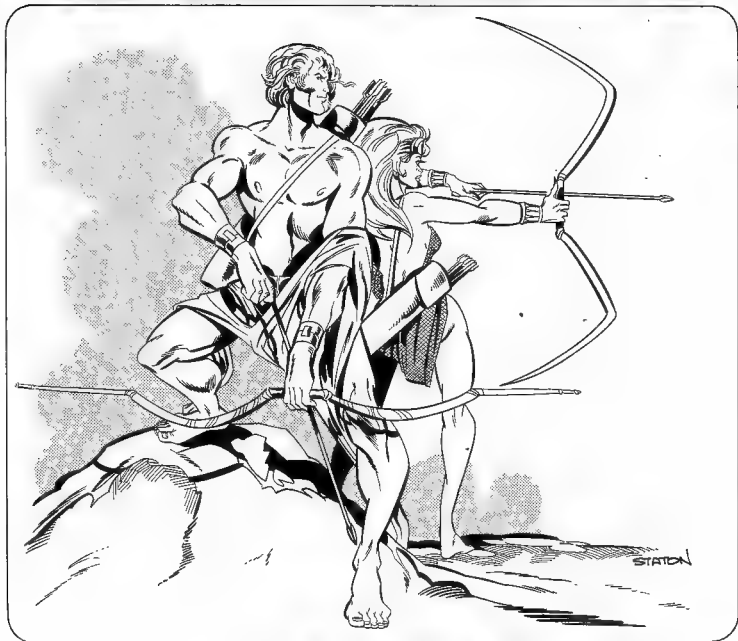
HE BECOMES... THAT... NIGHT!

YES, THE OLD DAYS
ARE NEAR FORGOTTEN
BUT ARE THEY
EVER GONE?



SATOSHI HIROTA
SCRIPT
MRS FRIEDRICH
ADDITIONAL DIALOGUE
MIKA IDE
ARTWORK

THE GODS OF MOUNT OLYMPUS IN ANCIENT MYTHOLOGY



CHAPTER THREE

©1976 JOHNNY ACHZIGER
and JOE STATON

APOLLO AND ARTEMIS

PLEASE, HOMER, HONOR US WITH ONE OF YOUR STORIES.

YES, SIR, TELL US OF APOLLO AND ARTEMIS.

AN EXCELLENT CHOICE! THE TWINS, APOLLO AND ARTEMIS, WERE THE GREATEST HUNTERS OF ALL TIME. I SHALL TELL YOU OF SOME OF THEIR EXPLOITS.

THEIR PARENTS WERE MIGHTY ZEUS AND LETO, DAUGHTER OF TITANS. ZEUS COURTED LETO IN THE FORM OF A QUAIL.

WHEN HERA FOUND OUT ABOUT HER HUSBAND'S INFIDELITY, SHE SWORE HER REVENGE.

ONCE MORE, MY HUSBAND DISHONORS ME! I VOW THAT LETO SHALL WISH SHE NEVER MET ZEUS!

HERA SENT THE SERPENT, PYTHON, TO PURSUE LETO, AND CURSED ANY MORTAL WHO MIGHT AID HER.

WITH THE AID OF POSEIDON, LETO ESCAPED THE MONSTER AND CAME TO THE ISLAND OF DELOS, WHERE SHE SOON GAVE BIRTH TO ARTEMIS AND APOLLO.


DID I NOT TELL YOU THEY WERE BEAUTIFUL?

INDEED THEY ARE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL CHILDREN EVER BORN!

GODS GROW UP FAST AND WHEN HE WAS BUT FOUR DAYS OLD, APOLLO WENT TO HEPHAESTUS FOR WEAPONS.

AND WHAT PRESENTS MAY I GIVE MY WONDERFUL DAUGHTER, ARTEMIS?

I WOULD LIKE A BOY AND ARROW LIKE APOLLO'S, A HUNTING TUNIC AND BOOTS, SIXTY YOUNG OCEAN NYMPHS AS MY ATTENDANTS, AND... ETERNAL VIRGINITY!




CROWN TO MANHOOD,
APOLLO SOUGHT
OUT HIS MOTHER'S
ENEMY,
PYTHON...

...AND SLEW HIM
WITH ONE OF
HIS SILVER ARROWS.




NOW ROT WHERE
YOU LIE!



APOLLO FOUNDED AN ORACLE AT
DELPHI WHERE MEN COULD COME
AND HAVE THEIR FUTURES FORETOLD.

HIS MOTHER AND SISTER
SOON JOINED HIM THERE
AND ALL WERE HAPPY...

BUT ONE DAY THE GIANT *TITUS*
CAUGHT LETO AT A DISTANCE
FROM THE TEMPLE.



COME, BEAUTEIOUS
ONE, AND CEASE
YOUR STRUGGLES.
I WILL NOT
HURT YOU.



APOLLO AND ARTEMIS RACED
TO THEIR MOTHER'S AID.

FOR HIS CRIME, *TITUS*'
SOUL WAS BANISHED
TO DREAD TARTARUS.

HELP!
APOLLO!
SAVE
ME!

ONE SPRING MORNING...

EROS, YOU ARE SUCH A SILLY CHILD, PLAYING WITH WEAPONS AS IF YOU WERE A MAN. THESE WERE NOT MEANT FOR THE LIKES OF YOU.

YOU WILL SOON SEE THAT THESE ARE NO ORDINARY ARROWS, IMPUDENT ONE!

EROS' LOVE-ARROW HAD AN IMMEDIATE EFFECT UPON APOLLO WHEN HE SPIED THE NYMPH DAPHNE, A PRIESTESS OF GAEA.

NEVER HAVE I SEEN A MORE BEAUTIFUL WOMAN! I MUST HAVE HER!

HOWEVER, DAPHNE WAS DETERMINED TO RETAIN HER PURITY AND RAN FROM HIM.

GO AWAY! I WOULD HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU!

WAIT! I AM NOT AN ORDINARY MORTAL. I AM APOLLO!

OH, GAEA, SAVE ME! I HAVE BEEN FAITHFUL TO YOU!

GAEA ANSWERED DAPHNE'S PRAYER BY TRANSFORMING HER INTO A LAUREL TREE!

EVER AFTER, APOLLO WORE A CROWN OF LAURELS IN MEMORY OF DAPHNE.



ONE DAY, ORION, THE SON OF POSEIDON AND EURALE, WAS HUNTING IN THE WOODS NEAR DELPHI.

WE'LL EAT WELL TONIGHT, SIRUS!



LOS, GODDESS OF THE DAWN, FELL IN LOVE WITH ORION, AND SEDUCED HIM NEAR APOLLO'S TEMPLE.



THEY DEFILE MY TEMPLE! I SHALL NOT FORGET THIS INCIDENT!

WHEN ORION FIRST MET ARTEMIS, A DISPUTE AROSE.

THE BOAR IS MINE. I SHOT IT FIRST.

BUT MY ARROW KILLED IT, MORTAL, AS IT WILL YOU, UNLESS YOU LEAVE IMMEDIATELY!



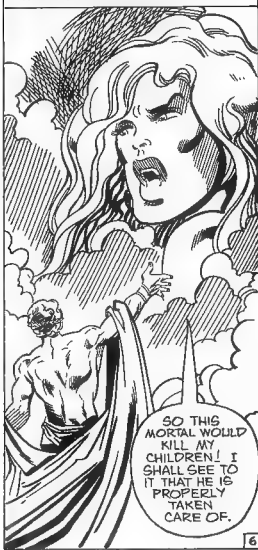
BUT ORION WAS PERSISTENT, AND SOON ARTEMIS FELT HER ADMIRATION FOR THIS MORTAL TURNING TO LOVE.

I KILLED ALL THE WILD BEASTS OF THE ISLAND OF CHIOS AND I WILL NOT REST UNTIL I'VE RID THE WORLD OF ALL ITS MONSTROUS CREATURES.



AS BOASTFUL AS HERAKLES, BUT MUCH MORE HANDSOME.

FEARING HIS SISTER WOULD EVENTUALLY FALL PREY TO ORION'S CHARMS, (AND WISHING TO PUNISH ORION FOR DEFILEING HIS ORACLE AT DELPHI) APOLLO REPEATED ORION'S BOASTS TO MOTHER EARTH... GAEA.



SO THIS MORTAL WOULD KILL MY CHILDREN! I SHALL SEE TO IT THAT HE IS PROPERLY TAKEN CARE OF.





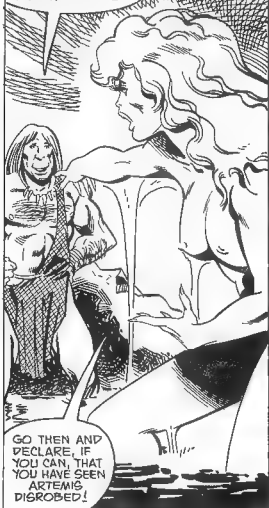
AFTER A LONG CHASE, THE HUNSMAN ACTAEON PAUSED TO REFRESH HIMSELF, WHEN HE HEARD LAUGHTER.



PEERING AROUND A BOULDER, HE SAW ARTEMIS AND HER NYMPHS, WHO WERE ALSO RELAXING AFTER A HUNT.



MY COMRADES WILL BE GREATLY AMUSED TONIGHT WHEN THEY HEAR THAT ARTEMIS DISPLAYED HERSELF THUSLY IN MY PRESENCE!



GO THEN AND DECLARE, IF YOU CAN, THAT YOU HAVE SEEN ARTEMIS DISROBED!

ACTAEON WAS IMMEDIATELY TRANSFORMED INTO A STAG.

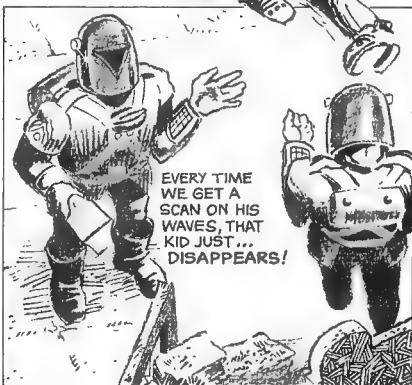
I HEAR MY HUNTING DOGS... THEY'VE SCENTED GAME... THEY'RE COMING THIS WAY!
OH NO!

SUDDENLY, ACTAEON'S OWN HOUNDS WERE UPON HIM AND HE WAS TORN TO PIECES.

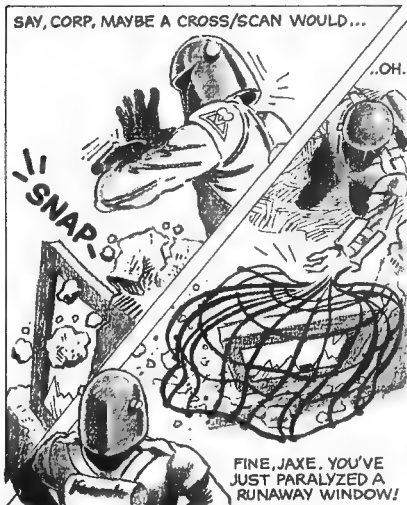
AND NOW THE HOUR IS LATE, AND THE OLD POET MUST HAVE HIS SLEEP.



WE'RE CLOSE
ENOUGH TO GET A
FAINT READING—
TRY TO THE
LEFT.



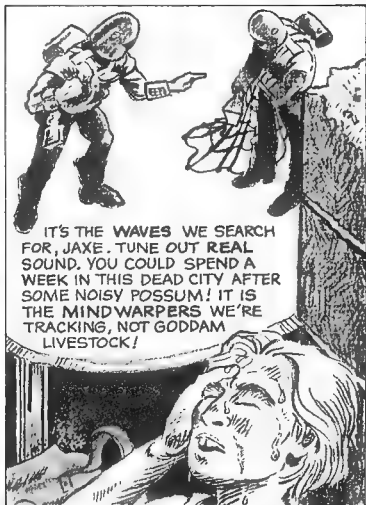
EVERY TIME
WE GET A
SCAN ON HIS
WAVES, THAT
KID JUST ...
DISAPPEARS!



SAY, CORP, MAYBE A CROSS/SCAN WOULD...

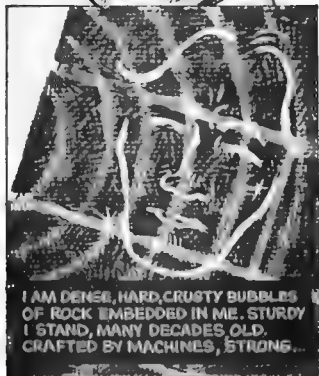
..OH.

FINE, JAXE. YOU'VE
JUST PARALYZED A
RUNAWAY WINDOW!

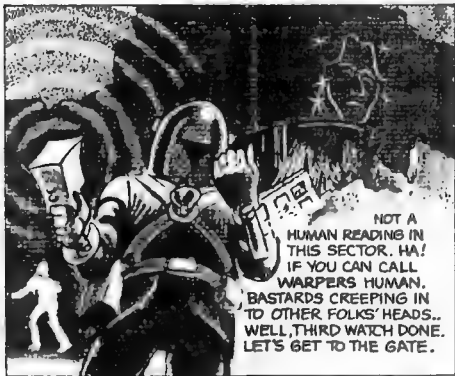


IT'S THE WAVES WE SEARCH
FOR, JAXE. TUNE OUT REAL
SOUND. YOU COULD SPEND A
WEEK IN THIS DEAD CITY AFTER
SOME NOISY POSSUM! IT IS
THE MINDWARPERS WE'RE
TRACKING, NOT GODDAM
LIVESTOCK!

CAN'T... RUN ANY MORE...
MUST WARP... AWAY... NOW.



I AM DENSE, HARD, CRUSTY BUBBLES
OF ROCK EMBEDDED IN ME. STURDY
I STAND, MANY DECADES OLD,
CRAFTED BY MACHINES, STRONG...



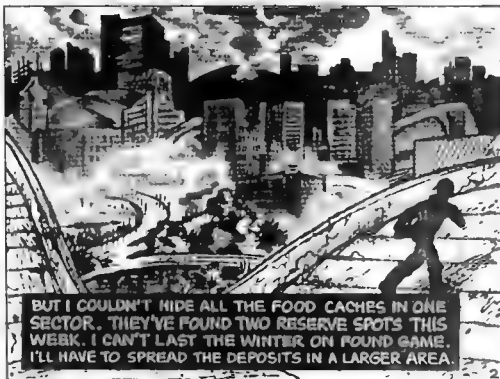
NOT A
HUMAN READING IN
THIS SECTOR. HA!
IF YOU CAN CALL
WARPERS HUMAN.
BASTARDS CREEPING IN
TO OTHER FOLKS' HEADS..
WELL, THIRD WATCH DONE.
LET'S GET TO THE GATE.

HEADTRIPS

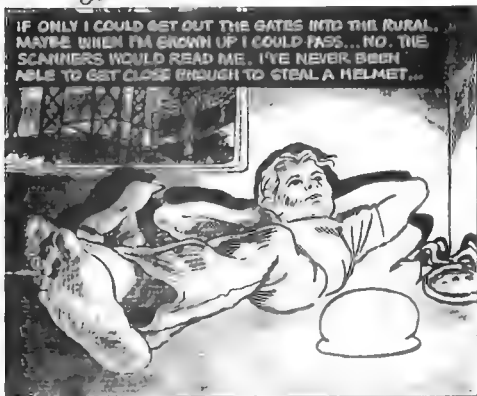
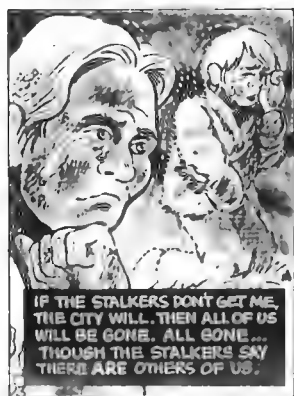
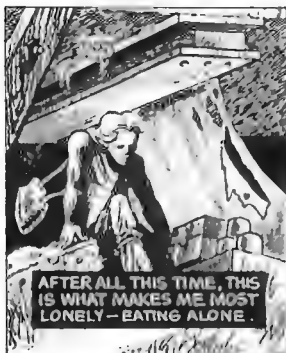
© 1976
LEE MARRS



THEY'VE PUT ON MORE
STALKERS... EVERYWHERE



BUT I COULDN'T HIDE ALL THE FOOD CACHES IN ONE
SECTOR. THEY'VE FOUND TWO RESERVE SPOTS THIS
WEEK. I CAN'T LAST THE WINTER ON FOUND GAME.
I'LL HAVE TO SPREAD THE DEPOSITS IN A LARGER AREA.

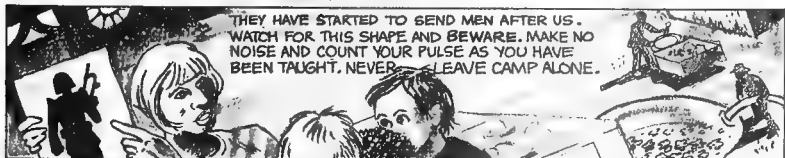


IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE STALKERS, I'D GO CRAZY. THEY'RE ALMOST COMPANY, OF SORTS. BUT... IT WAS SO GOOD BEFORE - SO GOOD WITH ALL THE OTHERS...

WE ARE DIFFERENT, ZAC. SOME OF US CAN DO THINGS MOST PEOPLE CANNOT.



THEY HAVE STARTED TO SEND MEN AFTER US. WATCH FOR THIS SHAPE AND BEWARE. MAKE NO NOISE AND COUNT YOUR PULSE AS YOU HAVE BEEN TAUGHT. NEVER... LEAVE CAMP ALONE.



WE STAYED AS THE CITY DIED. WE SOMETIMES KNEW WHEN THE TREMORS WOULD HIT. WE TRIED TO TELL THEM, BUT IN THEIR GRIEF AND FEAR THEY TURNED ON US: WE WERE FIRST SET APART; THEN, LATER, JAILED. HOWEVER, THE DANGER MADE US STRONG AND...

WE ESCAPED AND HID OUT!

YES, ZAC. AND THEY LEFT THE CITIES TO US. NOW - TO BED.

IT IS TIME FOR ZAC. HIS AURA FLARES TWICE A DAY... OR MORE.

WE'LL BEGIN IMPRINTING SOON.



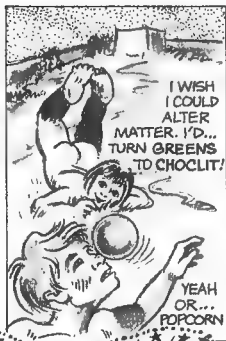
WEEKS LATER

O.K. ZAC, NOW JUST RELAX, BREATHE IN THE SECOND RHYTHM AND FOCUS ON THE CHAIR. PUSH INTO THE CHAIR... RELAX...



OH, FINE! FINE, DEAR. NOW PUSH BACK TO YOUR OWN IMAGE... QUICKLY! LATER, YOU CAN BUILD UP TIME.









MY FAMILY WERE FULL-RANGE WARPERS, BUT MY BROTHER COULD ONLY ALTER MATTER. AND I COULDN'T SEEM TO DEVELOP ANY GIFT AT ALL. MAYBE IF MY PARENTS HAD LIVED LONGER... BUT THEY WERE CAUGHT, JED COULD STILL PROTECT US - HE'D

JAM THEIR NETS. THEN JED GOT AN INFECTED LEG FROM A SHARP TILE. HE WENT INTO A COMA BEFORE HE COULD HEAL HIMSELF.



AFTER JED DIED, I DIDN'T WANT TO LIVE... WENT A LITTLE CRAZY, BUT YOU GET USED TO SURVIVING, LIKE A HABIT, REFLEX. STILL... THE LONELINESS... YAWN- SO GLAD TO... FIND... YOU... GLAD...



MY ONLY DEFENSE IS WARPING AWAY TO AN ADJACENT OBJECT. BUT THAT CAN'T HELP YOU...

WITHOUT MY GIFT DEVELOPED, MY WAVES DON'T SEEM TO REGISTER ON THE SCANNERS. BUT THIS IS THE ONLY LIFE I KNOW... LOOK, WE'LL JUST SPLIT UP WHEN WE ARE TRACKED. JOIN UP LATER.



IT'S GOOD
TO HAVE
A FRIEND.



I CAN'T
MINDTOUCH
LIKE LESTA,
BUT I ...

I BURST SO FAST, IT'S ALL GONE IN
A FLASH... SADNESS... I ...



MY
MOTHER
SAID IT'S
ALWAYS LIKE
THAT AT FIRST..
THEN IT GETS
... BETTER AND... HMM
RUB MY TUMMY AGAIN...



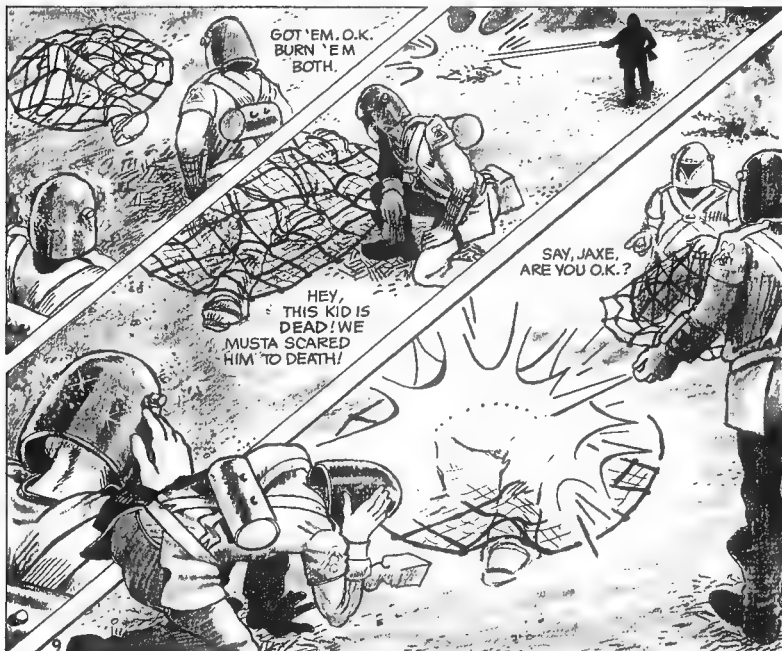
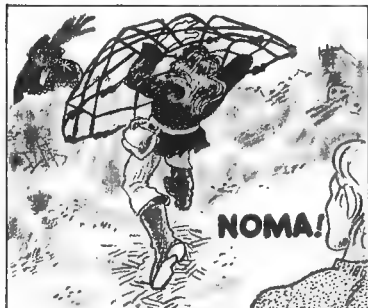
OH NO, STALKERS!



DAMNIT!
I WASN'T
WATCHING!
FORGOT...
STUPID...



AWAY!
WE SPLIT!



JAXE, YOU LOOK BUM.

WIA.
UH...NOMA...

JAXE, YOU LOOK
ROTTEN. SAY, WE
DON'T LIKE THIS
ANYMORE THAN
YOU DO! KILLIN'
KIDS ISN'T OUR
IDEA OF BATTLE.

I'M
INSIDE
ANOTHER
PERSON!

A STALKER!
WHERE IS HIS
MIND? OH, I FEEL
ONLY ME—HERE.
I... KILLED HIM...
HIS SELF... NOMA?

I'M HERE! INSIDE!

HELL, JAXE,
MY FIRST TOUR
HERE I MUSTA
VOMITED TWICE
A DAY. DON'T YA
WORRY. WE'LL
CUT SHORT THE
WATCH AND PUT
YOU THROUGH
THE EAST GATE.

NOMA IS GONE. OTHERS GONE. ALONE
AGAIN. IN THIS BODY...THIS DEAD CITY.
NOMA...BURNED. ALL IS DEAD HERE...

YOU'LL BE O.K.
AFTER A LIL'
R. AND R.!
GET YOURSELF
TOGETHER.

UH... ER...YES.
I HAVE ..TO ...
GET MYSELF..
TOGETHER.

TOGETHER, I'VE GOT TO THINK! GOING OUT
WITH THEM, I... WAIT! OUTSIDE! I'M GETTING
OUT! NO MORE RUNNING, FEAR. AT LAST...

HEY, RAMN,
YA COMIN'
ON?

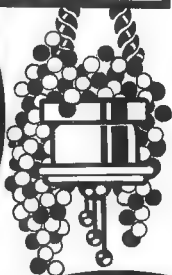
OUT THE GATE. AT LAST... IF I'M GOING OUT,
MAYBE OTHER WARPERS HAVE, TOO. TO FEEL
MINDTOUCH AGAIN...YES! OTHERS MUST
HAVE MADE IT... I'LL FIND THEM—OUT THERE.



NO SLEEP TONIGHT,
MY FEARS ARE
UP AND ABOUT.
NO. NO. NO...

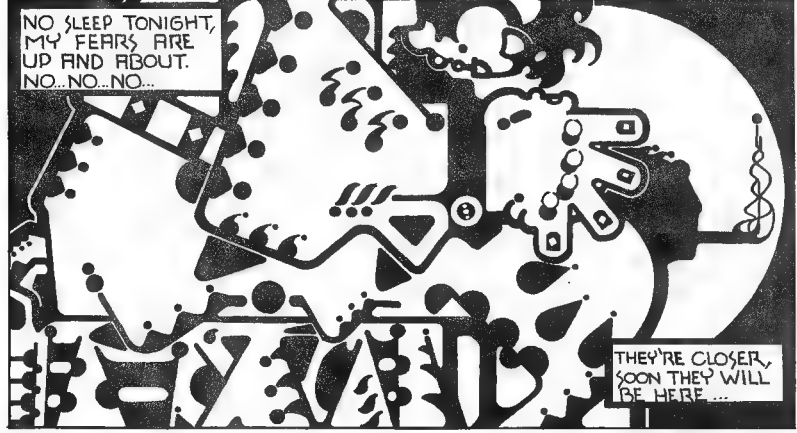
THEY'RE COMING,
SOON THEY WILL
BE HERE...

MY FEARS




LIFE USED TO BE
SO GOOD, ALL
MY DREAMS WERE
COMING TRUE...

WHAT ABOUT NOW?
WELL, THOSE DREAMS
HAVE BECOME
MY NIGHTMARES...




NO SLEEP TONIGHT,
MY FEARS ARE
UP AND ABOUT.
NO...NO...NO...

THEY'RE CLOSER,
SOON THEY WILL
BE HERE ...

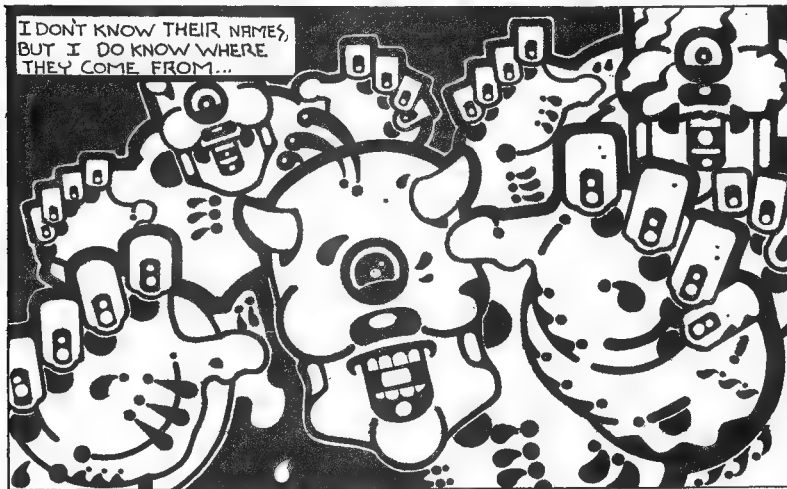


I'VE LOST LOVE
AND FOUND HATE.
I WAS ONCE SO STRONG.
I WAS KING OF MY WORLD,
BUT NOW, TONIGHT
I AM SLAVE OF A KING.

I NO LONGER BELIEVE
IN THE POSITIVE THINGS
IN LIFE.
ONLY THE NEGATIVE THINGS,
ONLY MY FEARS.



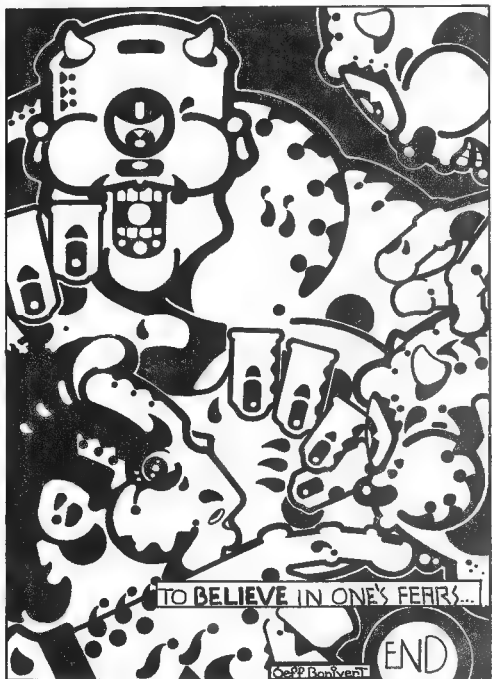
PERHAPS, THIS
IS WHAT IT'S LIKE
TO GO MAD...



YOU SEE, MY FEARS ARE REAL.
IT MAKES NO SENSE.
I KNOW THAT...



AND PERHAPS,
THIS IS WHAT IT'S
LIKE TO GO
MAD:

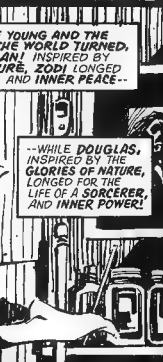


TO BELIEVE IN ONE'S FEARS...

END

©1999 Bonivers

THE END.



"I HAD NOT SEEN don DEGENERATO FOR SEVERAL MONTHS. IT WAS THE WINTER OF 1976-77. I HAD THE CERTAINTY THAT HE WAS WITH don PESCALITO IN CENTRAL MEXICO, SO I MADE PREPARATIONS TO DEPART.

"AT THE LAST MINUTE, HOWEVER, I WAS SEIZED WITH THE CONVICTION THAT HE WAS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA. THEN, I THOUGHT OF ATLANTIC CITY. THEN, A FREIGHTER FIVE HUNDRED LEAGUES OUT TO SEA. I REALIZED I SHOULD STASH MY STASH AND GIVE HIM A CALL.

"I CAUGHT UP TO HIM ON THE EVENING SHE ARRIVED!

WELCOME, don PESCALITO! PAY NO HEED TO MY WANDERING APPRENTICE!

IS THIS YOUR APPRENTICE?

SHE IS, don DEGENERATO! MEET--

--PEYOTE ST. JEAN!

IT SEEMS TO ME HE WOULD DO THAT AND MORE, DESPITE HIS GREAT AGE, don PESCALITO!

ALL YOU HAVE TOLD ME ABOUT HIM IS TRUE!

ALL I HAVE TOLD YOU IS WHAT I HAVE TOLD YOU, PEYO-TITA: THE DOUBLE ENTENDRES OF A MAN WHO SPEAKS NO FRENCH!

BELIEVE NOTHING--AND EVERYTHING--UNTIL YOU SEE FOR YOURSELF!

PEYO-TITS, MY FRIEND HAS BROUGHT YOU TO ME FOR THE FINAL RITUAL--THE SORCERER'S INSURRECTION!

ONCE, IT BELONGED TO DR. DOUGLAS DEDROOD, KNOWN TO EUROPE AS THE MONGOOSE! IT WAS HIS POWER SOURCE IN CONTROLLING A MIGHTY ALLY!

--AND SHOULD YOU PASS WHAT WE PLAN FOR YOU THIS EVENING--

OBSERVE, CLOSELY, THIS RING!

YOU, YOUNG LADY, HAVE PASSED A RIGOROUS APPRENTICESHIP WITH MY FRIEND--

--WITHOUT PASSING WATER OR OUT--

--YOU WILL BECOME A FULL SORCERESS YOURSELF!



"SOME YEARS AGO, DOWN DEGENERATO AND I WENT TO THE MOUNTAINS, SEEKING AN ALLY. I BATTLED A MAMMOTH MOSQUITO, BUT SAW NO ALLY, AND CAME BACK MYSTIFIED!"



ARE YOU PREPARED, WOMAN?

I AM PREPARED

THEN LET THE DANCE BEGIN!

"GLIDDENCY A FIGURE STEPPED FROM THE SHADOWS DANCING IN THE FOREST!"

"MY HEART BEGAN TO POUND! MY TONGUE TREMBLED AND DRIED! BUT EACH OF THE OTHERS REACTED

DIFFERENTLY!"



MY NAME IS DEXTER DEDROOD, SON OF DOUGLAS DEDROOD, AND ONE OTHER!

I CLAIM THE RING!

IT IS MINE, BY RIGHT OF INHERITANCE! SHE DOES NOT ENTER INTO IT AT ALL!

SHE HAS EARNED HER RIGHT TO TRY!

PERHAPS YOU WOULD LIKE TO TAKE IT FROM HER?

PERHAPS IT IS WHAT YOU TWO BRUTOS BROUGHT ME HERE FOR IN THE FIRST PLACE!



A WAR? SHE AND I?

I WOULD LIKE THAT!

IF YOU MUST BE DEFEATED, DEDROOD, LET'S LET THAT DANCE BEGIN!



GOOD!

"DOK DEGENERATO AND DOK PESCALITO STOOD TO ONE SIDE! THEY LOOKED LIKE TWO IGUANAS, BASKING IN THE MOONLIGHT! NEITHER SPOKE, THOUGH DOK PESCALITO SMOKED MIGHTILY!



"I WANTED TO ASK WHAT WOULD HAPPEN, BUT I COULD NOT!

"DEDROOD AND PEYOTE STOOD STARING, DEEP INTO THE DEPTHS BEHIND THE EYES! MY OWN HEAD GREW DIZZY! THEY NEVER BLINKED!



"DOK PESCALITO KNELT TO REFILL HIS PIPE AND FINALLY SPOKE TO ME!

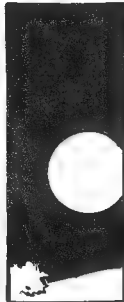
HERE, CABRÓN! THIS IS MY SPECIAL BLEND!

TAKE IT TO THE COMBATANTS!

THE UNIVERSAL HERB WILL OPEN THE GATES TO THE SORCERER'S WORLD! THERE DWELLS THE ALLY, AND THERE -



--ONE OF YOU WILL TAKE CONTROL!



"THE WORLD WITH-DREW--

--AND A NEW ONE GREW, WHERE EVERYTHING WAS DIFFERENT BUT FAMILIAR! THAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE, I KNOW! THAT'S WHY I COULD SEE IT!



"I TOOK A SECOND TOKE!

THE BATTLE BEGINS!

"THE DARK MAN IN THE DISTANCE
MURDERED!"



ONE WILL LEARN WHAT THE ALLY IS,
AND WHY IT LURKS AT THE THRESHOLD,
HAD EYES GLEAMING 'NEATH A
SPUTTERING MOON!



"PEYOTE READIED HERSELF!"



"HALF OF
HER GARB
SUCCUMBED
TO HIS
ASSAULT!"



"HE BLOCKED IT,
AND REPLIED!"





*I CANNOT DESCRIBE WHAT HAPPENED NEXT!



DEATH COMES--BUT WHAT DID don PESCALITO TEACH ME?



DEATH IS AN ADVISOR--FOR, KNOWING HE COMES, THERE CAN BE NO MORE BULLSHIT!



DEATH HIMSELF KNOWS HOW TO ESCAPE...

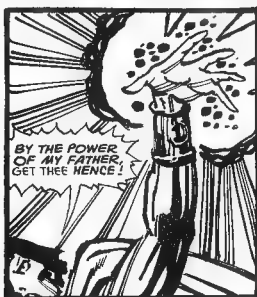


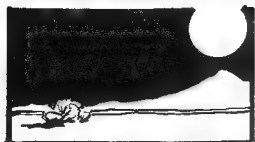
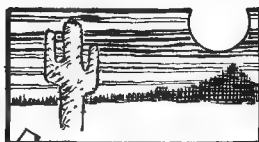
GREAT SPIRIT!

DEATH IS don PESCALITO!









"I STUMBLED FORWARD, HOLDING-
OUT MY SHIRT! PEYOTE TOOK IT
CALMLY, WITHOUT REAL NOTICE!



THANK YOU, DON DEGENERATO--BUT I
NO LONGER NEED IT! IN LEARNING
THE SORCERERS INSURRECTION, I HAVE
LEARNED THE TRUE VALUE OF
MATERIAL THINGS!



"I GATHERED DEXTER
DIDROD TOGETHER,
AND LED HIM TOWARD
THE MAIN HIGHWAY,
WHERE HE COULD FIND
HELP! I WAS WISHING
I COULD UNDERSTAND
WHAT I'D JUST SEEN--



GODS, SPIRITS, AND
ALL OTHERS PRESENT,
PERMIT ME TO
INTRODUCE--

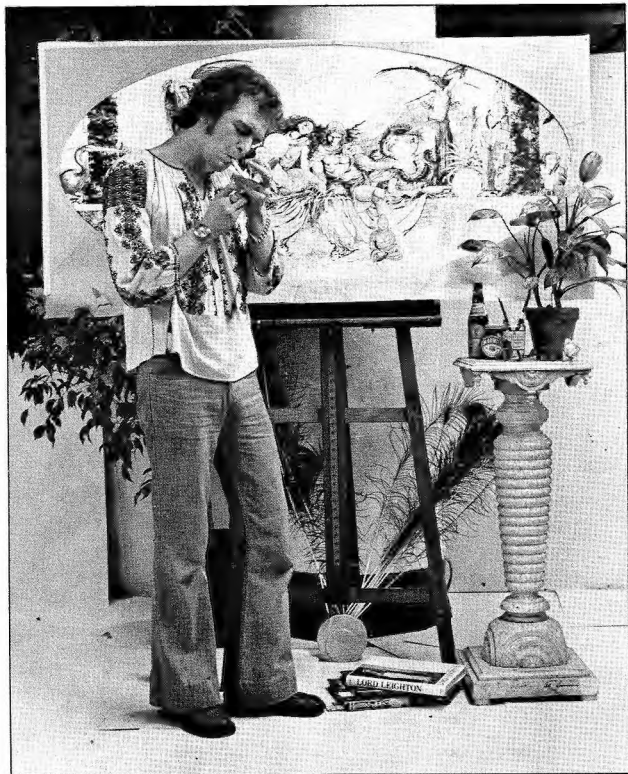
Skywalker

CONCEIVED, PLOTTED & ARTED
by MIKE VOSSBURG

IALOGUE by
STEVE ENGLEHART

LETTERS
ORZ





There is no such thing as a *perfectionist*. One who is branded so doesn't secretly enjoy the epithet or feel proud of this misnomer of a title. I think the fact is that if one is the type to acquire the label genuinely, then that type is, to be correct, simply a man without self-deception.

What you see on the cover, (a coloured photo) is a detail of the latest rough for my picture *Artemis and Apollo*. I have done five such *roughs* since May of last year, thinking each time that I had begun the finished article. I hope to start and complete the publishable one this year, 1977. Please watch for it, it should be a good one; you'll know it by the name.

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